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## BLUEJACKET, THE BOY SCOUT OF THE WILDERNESS. By MORRIS REDWING.



"Hold your temper, old man, and you'll live longer." The hermit whirled upon the speaker with blazing eyes. His look was terrible to behold. He recoiled, however, before the leveled muzzle of a rifle. The owner of the rifle was, however, but a boy, and small at that.



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# BLUEJACKET,

## The Boy Scout of the Wilderness.

A ROMANCE OF THRILLING INTEREST.

By MORRIS REDWING,

Author of "Brave Bryan, the Hero of Corinth," "Mountain Tom, the Rebel Raider," Etc., Etc.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A STRANGE SCENE.

"FALL on your knees, man, and worship. He who refuses the great master of the universe must die!"

It was a thrilling scene, and altogether a most remarkable one.

The sunlight penetrated an opening in the woods and glanced warmly on an elevation, rock-crowned, that rose like a pyramid in the heart of that wide stretch of woods south of the Rapidan, known as the Wilderness.

But two men were present.

One was a man of middle age, with a dark, stern face, seamed with care and, perhaps, evil passions; the other—how shall we describe "Vandorf the Mad?"

Such was the name he bore in this part of the country; and it was one that did not belie him, for the wandering hermit of the Wilderness was certainly mad.

He was a slender, wiry individual, with snowy hair and beard, with a certain deformity about the shoulders that raised one some inches higher than the other, and much thicker.

This deformity tended to draw the old man's head to one side, where he habitually carried it, giving him an addled appearance of wisdom.

Whether wiser or not, the old man was certainly mad.

"Bow down and worship."

In clear, low, yet determined tones came the voice of Vandorf.

The man of middle age was already upon his knees, his hands secured behind him with a stout thong of deer-skin. There was a look of vengeful wrath in the man's eyes, and his bearded lips were tightly compressed.

Giles Gorfoot was deeply enraged.

Yet, with a mighty effort he smothered his wrath, as he realized he must in the presence of Vandorf the Mad. It was hard to yield the last point, however, and make obeisance to the hideous image that confronted him.

On a flat rock the mad hermit had set up an image of stone. It had been rather rudely carved, and was altogether hideous to look upon.

"This," said Vandorf, touching the stone bosom of the figure, "is King Dorus, the ruler of the wilderness. I am his prime minister, and whoso comes into the kingly presence must fall down and worship."

A flame shot up from the eyes of the kneeling man.

"I did not come into the presence of this hideous monster," articulated Giles Gorfoot, determined to make one last appeal to Vandorf the Mad. "I was brought here against my wishes, and ought not to be made to bow before this image of stone."

"Ho—ho! that's no excuse," chuckled the mad hermit. "You must bow, and at once."

"I can't do it, old man."

"Do you want to die?"

"Not just at present."

"Then bow!"

"But——"

"Bow!"

Something gleamed in the hand of the speaker.

Giles Gorfoot shuddered as he gazed upon it—a long, keen-bladed knife, the point of which was red and dripping, yet warm with the blood of some victim of the mad hermit's wrath.

"This in your heart, Giles, if you refuse," and Vandorf waved his bloody blade aloft, and hissed hotly over his head the last words we have recorded.

There was no escaping the inevitable.

Gorfoot bowed his head before the giant image—bowed—and in his secret soul cursed the man who compelled the mockery of worship.

"It is well!"

A strange smile swept the visage of Vandorf the Mad.

The man on the ground still remained with bowed form, while the mad hermit proceeded:

"Once you were a worshiper at a Godly shrine, Giles Gorfoot; once you appealed to hearts from the pulpit, and pointed them the way to a lofty home in the life beyond the grave. You had a powerful fascination about you then, and many lambs were led to know and to taste of the bread of life; but you stood up and worshiped as the hypocrite and the villain worships. Christianity you wore as a cloak to cover your black and hideous soul. Reverend Turner Meeks was a wolf in sheep's clothing. But why dwell on this, when Giles Gorfoot knows it better than I?"

During this harangue the old hermit swung his long arms about, and seemed deeply excited.

His words, too, touched a long-dead chord in the heart and soul of the kneeling man. He started and looked up with wonder and alarm depicted on his face.

Who was the mad hermit, to know so much of his past



life? The kneeling man would have liked well to have answered that question.

Of a sudden Vandorf the Mad bent his bearded face almost to the ear of Gorfoot, and cried in a deep and awful whisper:

"Where is Belinda, the pure white soul you robbed of its heritage of innocence and cast out of society's pale forever? I demand of the serpent what he hath done with the dove he infected with his poison. Speak! or I'll drive this knife to your black heart!"

For some moments the kneeling man was unable to utter a word. A strange, startled horror possessed his guilty soul.

"Belinda! Great God! she is dead!" at length fell in trembling accents from the lips of the kneeling man.

"And you are her murderer!"

With the words uttered hoarsely, Vandorf the Mad sprang to his feet and turned toward the giant image.

"See!"

With the word the hermit laid the point of the knife against the massive breast of the idol, a loud click followed, and the whole front of the stone giant opened, revealing sheet-iron lining within.

"Look!"

And well might the prisoner gaze with awe upon the scene. A blue flame shot upward apparently from the bowels of the stone, and the smell of brimstone was painfully strong.

"Satan claims his own, hypocrite!"

With the words Vandorf the Mad grasped his prisoner, and began dragging him toward the burning interior of the stone giant.

## CHAPTER II.

### BLUEJACKET.

BOOM—boom—boom!

Down through the Wilderness came the ominous roll of great guns, the hill-tops echoing and re-echoing the sound for miles around.

Grant was advancing.

He had crossed the Rubicon, and was on his march to Richmond by the right flank, and soon the blue and the gray would contend for the mastery with envenomed fierceness, from the Rapidan to the Chickahominy.

The bound and struggling Giles Gorfoot heard the sounds, and it sent a thrill of hope to his coward heart.

The fumes of burning brimstone filled his nostrils, as Vandorf the Mad, paused at the opening in the stone image, and listened for a moment to the deep-mouthed bay of Federal cannon.

"What is that?"

Involuntarily the words fell from the lips of the mad hermit.

"It is sounds of battle," cried Gorfoot, quickly. "The hordes of the North, like the barbarians of old, are sweeping down upon our Southern homes. Let us join together and smite the foul invaders to earth. Surely we ought to be friends in such a holy cause."

Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, grasped the wretched man after this one hope.

"Ha! the Yankee vandals, eh?" articulated Vandorf.

"Yes; they come to destroy our homes; let us up and at them at once. Our duty is not here, but on the field of strife."

"They will destroy our homes, you say?"

"Yes, yes; let us go at once and defend them."

Giles Gorfoot had made an unfortunate allusion.

"Our homes!" with bitter irony. "You may have an article of the kind mentioned, but Vandorf has not, and it was no vandal Yankee who destroyed it—no, no, but a smiling friend, a brother with saintly smile and soft voice, pleading in the name of the Nazarene for recognition. Ha! my brain will burst with the thought. And here am I hesitating. No, no, I will not hesitate another moment, but

cast the shiny serpent into a literal lake of fire and brimstone. Ha, ha!"

It was a blood-curdling laugh at the last.

Then the claw-like fingers tightened on the arms of the doomed prisoner, and he began to lift the horrified Gorfoot to hurl him into the hissing death-trap before him.

"Mercy!"

But there was no mercy in the heart of the wronged old madman.

"You plead in vain!" hissed the mad hermit. "You must die, betrayer of the innocent!"

Then with a wonderful display of strength Vandorf lifted the bound man in his arms and stood close beside the opening.

A gurgling cry of horror oozed from the lips of Giles Gorfoot, as he felt himself being lifted over into the horrible pit.

Something occurred to startle the madman from his work at that moment—the clear ring of a rifle, and the hiss of a bullet past his ear.

And then Vandorf dropped his intended victim back to earth with a loud cry of rage.

The bullet that had sped so near his own head had clipped the nose of the stone giant from its face.

Swinging the door to with a loud bang, Vandorf stood up beside the giant, and reaching up, felt of the spot where but a moment since was the proboscis of the idol.

"Fiends! who has ruined my baby?" cried the mad hermit, in accents of rage.

"Hold your temper, old man, and you'll live longer."

The hermit whirled upon the speaker with blazing eyes. His look was terrible to behold. He recoiled, however, before the leveled muzzle of a rifle.

The owner of the rifle was, however, but a boy, and small at that.

He wore a blue army jacket, his other garments being of homespun gray.

Thus, he wore the colors of both armies.

The boy was handsome, and an amused smile swept his face when he saw the look that covered the face of Vandorf the Mad.

"Put up your gun, rash boy," finally articulated Vandorf. "Do not risk incurring the wrath of the all-powerful King of the Wilderness by delaying a moment."

"And are you that wonderful king?" questioned the boy, coolly.

"No, I am but his prime minister. Behold the king!" and waving his arms, Vandorf pointed to the huge stone image, which presented an even more ludicrous appearance than ever, with his nose shot away.

It was a case of vandalism not to be overlooked by the madman of the hills.

"Where did you run afoul of that old stone idol?" queried the boy. "I hope you don't worship such a god as that, old man."

"He is the king of the woods."

"Indeed?"

"And you must bow down and worship him as this faithful subject has done," and Vandorf tapped the arm of his prisoner with the bare blade of his long knife.

"Good gracious! do you think I'd be guilty of such nonsense?" cried the boy. "Bother your stone king, I'll have nothing to do with him, or you, only that I deem it my duty to search you, so just throw down that knife and pay attention."

The madman glared at the boy furiously.

"No; savage looks won't help you any," said the boy.

"Bluejacket never run yet from an ordinary foe, and I consider you utterly harmless."

"You must look out for the fellow nevertheless," said Giles Gorfoot at this moment, a feeling of hope entering his bosom, now that he saw how determined and brave the boy was. "I believe the old chap is mad. He was about to murder me just now; but for your timely shot I am sure



my death would have been certain. If you will cut these cords I will assist you in securing this man."

"Do it at your peril," growled the madman.

"I never take a dare," uttered the boy jauntily, and with the words, he drew a knife and hurled it with such precision as to sever the cord that bound the prisoner.

With a glad cry Gorfoot sprang to his feet.

"Ha! you shall not escape!"

Thus hissed Vandorf as he sprang after Gorfoot. He was too late. The late prisoner bounded into a thicket, and Bluejacket stood before Vandorf disputing his further advance.

"No, old man, you cannot go on," cried the boy. "I wish to see the inside of yonder image."

### CHAPTER III.

#### BETRAYED.

BOOM—boom!

The solemn boom of guns—heavy cannon—rolled sullenly through the forest.

"Grant's guns!" uttered Bluejacket, gravely. "I must know the contents of yonder image, and of your pockets, at once. I am seeking information——"

"For the Yankee general?"

"Yes."

"Blind fool!" uttered the white-bearded hermit. "The man you just now released was a rebel spy."

"No!"

"It is true; I swear it. By setting him free you have opened the way for General Lee's success in the coming fight. You would not listen to me, and now see what a mess you have made of it. Foolish boy!"

"I am not so sure of that," returned Bluejacket. "I wish to see the inside of yonder image."

"Perhaps the king is solid granite."

"I know better. Open it quickly, or I'll put a bullet into your heart."

"I don't believe you."

Click!

Bluejacket drew the hammer of his rifle, but Vandorf the Mad did not flinch.

"Shoot if you like," he sneered, defiantly and fearlessly. "Vandorf is ready to die."

Dropping his knife, the hermit stood, with folded arms, confronting the boy scout, not a muscle of his aged face trembling with fear.

Of course Bluejacket did not shoot.

He saw readily enough that the man was not fully in his right mind, and began to suspect the giant image contained no secret after all.

Bluejacket lowered his gun.

"I cannot shoot a man in cold blood," he said, "but I am curious to know what you have inside that stone man. I saw it open a short time ago, and believe flames were ascending from beneath."

"It's true. Look!"

Vandorf once more stepped to the side of the giant and touched his breast. The front of the idol opened, and a blue flame, sickening with the odors of sulphur, came up from the base.

Bluejacket stepped eagerly forward and leaned very close to the giant. He was not off his guard, however, and one eye was constantly fixed on the queer madman.

"You were about to hurl the man I set free into that fire," said Bluejacket, after a momentary examination of the curious image.

"That was my intention."

"Why?"

For some moments Vandorf the Mad glared with flaming eyes and heaving bosom at his young questioner, and then he said:

"It is a long story, and will in no way benefit you."

"You need not tell it if you do not like," uttered the boy scout. "I wish to pry into no family secrets."

As the youth turned to depart the hermit detained him.

"Stop, boy. You are wise beyond your years; I will tell you all, and then you can judge why I am called Vandorf the Mad."

The story was, as the mountain hermit had said, a long one, but it was deeply interesting, and Bluejacket listened with wrapped attention to the end.

"Do you wonder now that I hate Turner Meeks, alias Giles Gorfoot, and that my brain runs wild at times?" concluded the strange being the boy scout had encountered in the heart of the great Wilderness.

"No, no," articulated the boy hotly, "I cannot blame you, and had I known the truth sooner, I would have permitted you to hurl that infamous scoundrel into the bottomless pit, if you had so desired."

"You were hasty, boy, but I forgive you," and Vandorf the Mad held out his hand.

The boy scout accepted this proffer of friendship, and the two stood for some moments without speech, hand clasped in hand, gazing into each other's eyes.

A strange silence rested over that scene, broken only by the rustle of the leaves in the breeze, and the sullen, distant boom of battle guns.

"I must go."

Bluejacket dropped the hand of the mad hermit and turned away.

"Stay. I would know your name before you go," cried Vandorf the Mad.

"I am called Bluejacket in the army."

"Yes; but that is not your name."

"No. You may call me Sim Sawyer."

"Sim Sawyer? I'll remember the name always, and—but I've said enough now."

The old hermit turned back to his idol, and the boy scout was about to proceed on his way, when the bushes parted and several men stepped into view—men in gray uniforms—representative soldiers of the South.

Bluejacket found himself covered by the muzzles of half a dozen gleaming carbines. These men were dismounted troopers from the advance guard of Lee's army. It was a sight that would have startled one less familiar with danger than the brave boy scout, who had faced death many times in the service of his country.

A smile touched Bluejacket's lips as he gazed into the faces of the men.

"Put back your guns, lads," he said, coolly. "You have no desire to injure a friend, I hope."

The men were a little nonplused at this cool assurance on the part of the boy scout.

"No use, little chap, we know ye; yer a Yank, and hev got ter go with us."

"Who's telling you?"

"We won't stand no foolin'," growled the leader of the squad. "You're my prisoner."

"But I am as loyal as you to the South."

"Too thin. That jacket gives you dead away, kid."

But the boy scout slapped his thigh with a low laugh.

"If them aren't Confederate breeches, then I don't know where you'll find 'em," said the boy with no little earnest pride.

The sergeant who commanded the troop seemed a little puzzled, and might, perhaps, have taken the young scout's word but for the sudden coming of another party upon the scene in the person of the mad hermit's late prisoner.

He stepped into view from behind the huge stone idol and confronted the boy scout.

"He is a Yankee. I know him, and will vouch for the truth of his being General Grant's spy!"

Sim Sawyer whirled and regarded Gorfoot sharply.

It was for this then that he had saved the man before him from death at the hands of the mad hermit.



## CHAPTER IV.

## A TERRIBLE MYSTERY.

"You utter an infamous falsehood!" cried the boy scout, with a flash of just indignation, as he faced the man whose life he had but lately saved. "I am a much better Confederate than you are."

But the protestations of the young scout availed him nothing. At first he thought of resisting, but when he saw the numbers and determination of the enemy, he concluded it best to succumb, and trust to luck for a chance to escape afterward.

Bluejacket was disarmed, and, at the suggestion of Gorfoot, his hands were pinioned.

"The youngster is one of the cleverest rogues in the Yankee army," asserted the traitor, "and it is well not to give him rope."

After this was accomplished, Gorfoot began looking about wonderingly for Vandorf the Mad.

The spot was completely surrounded, and it seemed utterly impossible for the old man to escape, and yet, somehow, he had mysteriously vanished.

"Keep your lines closed up, sergeant," ordered Gorfoot. "The man who called himself Vandorf cannot be far away. He was here when we came up, and I am sure has not escaped, unless he slipped through your line."

"Nobody's got past us," asserted the sergeant.

"But where is the old scamp?"

"Don't know. What do you call this?" and the rebel sergeant pointed to the image, which presented a rather ludicrous appearance now, with its nose shot away.

"It's the old man's idol," explained Gorfoot.

If the villainous Confederate was mystified at the sudden disappearance of Vandorf, Bluejacket was no less so. The owner of the stone idol was as much a mystery to the boy scout as he had been to others.

"By gracious! this beats me," growled Giles Gorfoot. "I cannot understand it at all. What do you know about it, boy?"

"About what?" queried Bluejacket, innocently.

"About old Vandorf, the mad hermit?"

"Nothing."

The traitor eyed the boy sharply. He distrusted the lad, and believed him in league with the mad hermit. And yet the boy had saved his life. But this might have all been a part of the plot.

"Confound your skin!" growled the man, "I've a notion to put you to the torture, and see if you will not tell something."

"You'd better not try it."

"Hal would you dare me to do it, boy?" and the evil eyes of Giles Gorfoot flamed with a venomous light.

"No; but I shall appeal to these gentlemen, who, as loyal subjects of the South, would not permit a Southern boy to be misused by one who has shown himself to be a villain and a coward."

The boy scout spoke slowly and evenly, with his eyes, during the time, fixed in a penetrating gaze, on the face of his evil accuser.

Gorfoot actually quailed before the boy's gaze, and quickly averting his face, the villain proceeded to investigate in other quarters.

He stood in front of King Dorus, at length.

He connected the mysterious disappearance of the mad hermit with this stone idol.

Gorfoot laid his hand on the breast of the image. There was a spring somewhere, which, if touched, would force the front of the giant to open. It did not seem hardly probable that Vandorf had escaped by entering the giant, since the interior was hot as Tartarus when Gorfoot last looked within the queer contrivance. Nevertheless Gorfoot was curious to see the inside of his stone majesty.

He passed his hand over the broad chest of the image several times, but did not succeed, as he had hoped, in touching the secret spring.

"Confound it!" he growled, angrily, "I can't see how the old fool ever got inside this giant——"

"Look a-here, pard," interrupted a huge Confederate trooper at this stage of the proceedings. "You must be a cussed fool to think that ar' China god's holler."

"I know it is."

"I don't take no stock in sich nonsense," growled the trooper. "Thar's only one way to git at ther facts in ther case, anyhow."

"Well?"

"Blow ther darn critter to pieces."

"Ha! that's a mighty good plan," uttered Gorfoot, "if we only had the powder, now."

"I think we can manage that," said the sergeant. "We can fix enough cartridges under the rock to crack the legs of the idol, and then it won't take a big pull to tumble the critter over."

"True. Get to work at once," cried Gorfoot, with the eager impatience of a boy.

Several men at once formed about the stone image, and under Gorfoot's directions were preparing to mine the foundation of the king, when suddenly all work ceased, and the would-be dynamiters started back in evident alarm.

"*Mortals, cease your desecration!*"

In hollow accents came the words, seemingly from the bowels of the earth.

"Great spoons! what was that?" cried the startled sergeant.

"It's the China god talkin'," uttered a stout trooper, in an awed tone, superstition evidently having him firmly in its grasp.

"Darn nonsense!" cried the impatient Gorfoot. "I know now how that infernal scamp escaped. He entered the image, and is even now concealed inside. We have the rascal on the hip, boys, and can win a golden prize if we destroy the god. I am sure there is a heap of gold and diamonds buried under this pedestal."

"Gold!"

"Diamonds!"

"Yes; enough to make us all rich," asserted Gorfoot.

The cupidity of the soldiers caused them to forget their fear for the time, and once more they went at the work of mining the image.

As may be supposed, Bluejacket watched proceedings with no little interest.

Would the vandals succeed in their work?

"Mortals, beware!"

Again came that warning.

"Ho, ho! you old fool, you can't scare us. We've got you now, Vandorf," cried Gorfoot, in a triumphant voice.

*Cling!*

It was a low yet a sharp sound that fell on the air, and with it one of the Confederate troopers sank in a heap to the ground, his head falling forward until it rested on the base of the stone king.

New alarm now seized upon the workers about the idol, and they started away, with cries of alarm.

Gorfoot, however, bent over the recumbent soldier at the foot of the image.

"What's the matter, Jack?"

And then Gorfoot seized the soldier by the arm and shook him sharply, but it had no effect.

The man was dead.

They all realized this, as the face of the soldier was exposed, with its wide-open, staring eyes, and white face.

"Dead!"

In a solemn voice the word fell from more than one lip, and then Gorfoot began looking for the wound. He found none. Not a mark, not a single sign to show where the death-messenger had entered the tabernacle of flesh.

It was altogether mysterious, and an awed feeling fell over the Confederate troopers.

"My soul! Boys, let's git!" uttered the sergeant, at length. "This ain't no place for us. We hed no business meddlin' with the stone image; the devil protects him."



"If we only had a rope we might pull the demon of stone over, and then I'm thinking we'd unearth all this mystery," said Giles Gorfoot.

With awed glances at the dead trooper, the Confederates began to retire. In vain Gorfoot pleaded with them; they would not remain on the haunted hill, where the evil one ruled supreme; and as even the villain Gorfoot was not ready to attempt fathoming the mystery alone—he had experienced one bout with the old man of the woods—he accompanied the troopers from the spot, they taking the boy scout with them a prisoner, and the body of the dead Jack, to bury it in the woods away from the fatal knob where King Dorus ruled in a mysterious and terrible manner. Bluejacket felt that the death of the soldier had not bettered his own fortunes greatly.

## CHAPTER V.

### DEATH AT HAND.

SHORTLY after the departure of the Confederate soldiers, the front of the stone image opened, and Vandorf the Mad stepped forth into the light of day.

"Ho! so the idiots thought to outwit and capture Vandorf the Mad. Couldn't do it—ho, ho! oh, no!"

Then the strange hermit began pacing up and down in front of King Dorus, his bony hands clinched over a small instrument that resembled a door-key.

It was not what it seemed, however, but an instrument of death, for from this had gone the barb of poisoned steel that penetrated the flesh of the rebel soldier, taking life almost instantly, without leaving a sign.

Had the Confederates taken the time to examine closely, they would have discovered several small holes in the stone pedestal on which the image rested. It was through one of these that the fatal shot passed to the life of the Confederate trooper.

"Let them go," muttered the mad old man, as he paced back and forth across the little plat of ground that lay before the stone king. "Had they not invaded the domain of King Dorus, and attempted to tear him from his throne, no harm would have come to them. They were warned in time, but they heeded not the warning; their blood be upon their own heads."

The hermit continued his walk, raising his head at times, and glaring down into the wilderness below.

"Grant is coming, the great Yankee general. He will sweep through this country with the wrath of an avenger, but woe to him and his if he touch my image, or trespass upon the domain of King Dorus!"

For a time the old hermit paused and remained speechless, listening to the distant boom of heavy guns.

"Yes, he's coming," muttered Vandorf, "but my jewels are safe. No vandal's hand shall touch the wealth that I meant should go to Belinda on her wedding-day. I've hoarded them now for years, and King Dorus has been their guard and defender, assisted by his body-guard, Vandorf the Mad. That boy! A marvelous youth was he, and now they have taken him into the wilderness, perhaps to murder him. I must look into this."

Then the strange old man made his way hastily from the spot, and was soon lost to view in the shadows of the forest below.

Not ten minutes had the mad hermit been gone, when the bushes parted on the opposite side of the opening, and a queer object stole upon the scene.

It was a human being, doubtless.

In rags, with disheveled hair, bleeding face and hands, and wild, glowing eyes that seemed living coals set in a human head.

A tattered skirt, and bare, bleeding feet.

A woman!

Yes, a woman, but one evidently in the last stages of insanity. She combed her long locks with bony fingers, and muttered incoherently as she advanced. When she

saw the huge stone image she stopped abruptly and glared at it in evident wonder.

Then a hollow laugh fell from the woman's lips as she advanced to the stone man and caressed its huge proportions with her thin arms and claw-like fingers.

In unintelligible language she chattered to the dumb idol of the woods, and for a time laughed and sang sweet snatches of a song in a way that was painful to behold.

Strange as it may appear, this haggard, draggled, mad creature was once young and beautiful. How then came she in this pitiable condition? Through man's baseness—one man's cruel sin, and that man a minister of God's holy gospel!

Can such things be in this world of ours?

Yes; but it is not for us here to discuss the subject, only so far as the acts of one man influence the movements of characters in our narrative of the war.

Bluejacket was borne away a prisoner, as we have seen in a preceding chapter. For some reason the infamous Gorfoot had conceived a deep hatred for the boy, and he had already signed the lad's death-warrant in his own brain.

After descending the steep hill, the Confederate party entered a dense tangle that was characteristic of many portions of the Wilderness.

There were many paths and wood-roads through the forest, and in one of the latter the troopers soon found themselves.

Under the shadow of the Virginia pines the body of the slain Confederate soldier was laid to rest. A volley of revolver balls was fired over the mound, and then the troopers were ready to move on.

"Wait, boys!" said Giles Gorfoot, as he stood beside the fresh mound. He had nearly usurped the place of the sergeant now, and his wishes were almost like commands to these men in gray.

A score of faces were turned toward the speaker.

"There should be two graves here instead of one," said the villain, pointing at the fresh earth covering the mortal remains of the late Confederate trooper.

"What you tryin' to git through ye now?" growled the sergeant, who did not just relish the power that Gorfoot wielded over his men.

"This, that the man who caused the death of our gallant comrade ought to keep him company to the land of shadows."

"In other words, he ought to die," said the sergeant.

"My meaning precisely," admitted Gorfoot.

"Produce the scoundrel, and we'll put him out of his misery quick enough," cried the sergeant.

"Exactly. There he is."

Gorfoot pointed at Bluejacket.

"What do ye mean by that?"

"He was in league with the man in the idol, and he can tell you how poor Jack came to die," asserted Giles Gorfoot, with a stern degree of emphasis.

"These brave soldiers are too intelligent to accept such vile nonsense for truth," uttered Bluejacket, gazing hopefully about upon the assembled Confederates.

But that glance satisfied him that every man was under the influence of Gorfoot completely.

A murmur went round among the troopers.

"We cannot cumber ourselves with this Yankee spy. Why not hang him up to one of these trees?"

"Just the thing."

"Gentlemen——"

But Sim Sawyer's voice was drowned in cries of:

"Hang him—hang him!" and the young scout knew that his doom was near at hand.

"Our hosses ain't jest handy," said the sergeant, "so wot's the difference whether the young cuss is hung or shot?"

"Hanging is the usual method of dealing with a spy," said Gorfoot, "but, in this instance, I am of the opinion that shooting would answer. The main object is to kill the



brute, and bullets are quite as effectual as the rope, I find oftentimes."

And it was decided that the boy scout should be secured to a tree, his body riddled with bullets, and left for the birds and beasts of prey to devour.

And this decision was reached in short meter, and with the utmost coolness, all form of trial being dispensed with.

Was this Confederate method of doing business?

Bluejacket never before heard of such unmilitary proceedings, even among the followers of Mosby.

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed the boy, "it cannot be that you will take my life without a hearing? Such an act would be contrary to custom, and to the laws of war."

"We make the law," sneered Giles Gorfoot.

The reader will naturally inquire why this brutal action on the part of Gorfoot, who never had met the boy scout until to-day, and who certainly was entitled to fair treatment on the part of this man, whose life he had saved from the mad demon of the mountain.

To explain all the reasons Gorfoot had would require too much space. One reason we will give, and that was, that the rebel villain had good reason to believe that the stone image covered a rich treasure. Did the brave boy scout live, he would fathom the mystery of the mountain to the bottom, which Gorfoot was extremely anxious he should not do. From the superstitious soldiers the man had no fear. It might be, too, that Bluejacket was in league with Vandorf the Mad, in which case the sooner he was out of the way the better.

And preparations for the cold-blooded murder of the boy scout went on, without let or hindrance, until the last act alone remained to be consummated.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MANIAC WANDERER.

BLUEJACKET would have made a break for liberty had the opportunity offered, but it did not, and he was bound to a Virginia pine, without chance to move any part of his body save his head.

"It's very sad, my boy," said the man who had once worn the garb of a Methodist preacher, a look of hypocritical sanctity creeping over his face, "but the Confederacy cannot permit Yankee spies to escape when they are once caught. Grant is coming, and Lee will meet him near the Rapidan, when a big slaughter will take place, and the great Northern army will be destroyed. It is running into a trap, my boy, a fact that you have discovered, and which you would communicate to General Grant should we permit you to escape. For the good of the South you must die. You have one minute to pray."

With these words the villain stepped back a few paces, and regarded the pale face of the bound boy sharply.

Not a word fell from the lips of Bluejacket in answer to the long, hypocritical speech of the ex-preacher.

"Perhaps you are not used to praying," said Gorfoot. "If you like I will offer a petition to the throne of grace for the good of your soul."

This was too much, even for the stoicism of the brave boy scout.

"Heaven preserve me from the curse your prayers would bring!" he said, in a voice of shocked emotion. "Don't fly in the face of Heaven with such blasphemy, hypocrite, knave!"

With an oath Gorfoot turned on his heel and left the boy to his doom.

Six men, with leveled carbines, took their places at a motion from the sergeant. Gorfoot turned his back upon the scene. Even his hardened heart was not proof against the sad scene.

It was murder.

A deep and solemn hush fell over the spot. The seconds seemed hours in their slow movements, while the infamous

Giles Gorfoot waited for the crash of the murderous guns.

Instead, however, came a loud hair-raising scream, that went like a dart of steel through every soul present.

The six executioners reeled back, and lowered their guns.

Again that scream arose, wild and thrilling, in the rear of the group of soldiers in gray. Instinctively all eyes were turned in the direction of the sound.

Gorfoot, who was already facing the spot from whence came the terrible outcry, felt his hair rising, so horrible and unearthly was the cry.

"Merciful Heaven! what is it?" he gasped out.

All eyes, all thoughts were turned from the prisoner for the time.

"Quick!" cried the sergeant, "go in there, boys, and see what it is."

But the gallant Confederates refused to move.

"It's a painter," said one of the gray-jackets. "My gran'dad war killed by one o' the varmints, and you don't ketch me nigh one o' the critters; they're powerful brutes and ud kill a dozen men ef they undertook it."

"Enough of them would, no doubt," agreed the sergeant, who was himself too deeply startled to think of saying: "Come on, boys," and leading the van on himself.

And so the supposed panther completely terrorized the Confederate troopers for a time.

The scream was not repeated, and in a little time the sergeant looked back at his prisoner—no, not at the young scout, but at the tree to which he had been bound.

The boy was gone!

An exclamation from the rebel sergeant's lips announced to his companions and to Gorfoot that something unusual had occurred.

Quickly the latter turned about and followed the gaze of the rebel sergeant. He saw what had occurred with a sulphurous oath.

Striding forward, Giles Gorfoot stood beside the pine, and noted the thongs lying severed on the ground.

His face became purple with rage.

"Sold, sold by a trick!" he uttered hoarsely. Then he turned upon the astounded men in gray.

"Boys, we are all fools—a pack of pesky idiots!"

"What's the trouble now, Mr. Gorfoot?" questioned the rebel sergeant.

"Trouble enough. That yelling was all made by friends of Bluejacket. He has escaped, and will carry most important news to General Grant. Oh, fools! idiots that we were!" and with clenched hand, the mad secessionist smote himself on the brow furiously.

"Maybe we can find the boy——"

"Maybe you can fly to the moon," interrupted Gorfoot savagely.

"Well, I don't see that the boys are to blame."

"Oh, no, of course not; the boys are little angels, to permit themselves to be frightened by an owl, or something less dangerous. Brave Confederate soldiers, indeed!"

An angry flush mounted to the brow of the sergeant at this rude speech.

"I think your bravery was sufficiently great to make up for what the boys lacked," he retorted. "You're even now trembling with fear, and your face is quite pale. Brave fellow, indeed!"

This recrimination was not designed to mend matters in the least, as Giles Gorfoot soon discovered, and so he made no second retort. Nevertheless he was terribly chagrined.

The astute Mr. Gorfoot had not guessed exactly right regarding the scream that had so frightened the rebel troopers. It was not one of Bluejacket's friends who did the screaming, and Sim Sawyer was as much astonished as was his enemy.

The diversion happened at the right moment, however, and doubtless saved the life of the boy scout.

Old Vandorf was creeping cautiously toward the tree to which the boy was bound, when the loud screams fell on his



ears. Peering through the bushes, he saw that an unexpected diversion had been created in his favor; and with the soft tread of a cat the mad hermit glided forward, and with a few rapid strokes of his knife set the bound young Unionist free.

Instantly Bluejacket followed Vandorf, the mad hermit, into the bushes; and in the course of ten minutes the twain came to a halt in a little forest glade, at least half a mile from the scene of the late promised tragedy.

"Well," said Vandorf, turning upon the youth, "the wretches meant to kill you."

"Yes. You certainly saved my life," answered the boy, giving the bony palm of the old hermit an affectionate squeeze.

"I'm not so sure of it," muttered the wild creature, who did not seem so mad now as when the young scout first looked upon him.

"You screamed like a catamount."

"I?"

The old hermit stared at the speaker in evident surprise.

"Yes. You yelled in a way that fairly made my hair stand on end," asserted the boy.

"Great snakes! can it be that I did give those awful screeches?" muttered the old hermit, in a scarcely audible tone. "It may be—it may be, and I not know it myself."

As if in answer to the doubts in the hermit's mind, a terrific scream came wailing to the ears of the twain through the pine forest.

"Ha! there it is again."

"And you are not the author!" ejaculated the astonished young scout. "I was deceiving myself; but who is it that screams out in that manner? Perhaps—and I had not thought of that—perhaps it is a panther."

Vandorf the Mad shook his head.

"No; it is the voice of a woman," he said, grimly.

Again came that scream, sounding now much nearer than before.

"The sound comes this way," uttered Bluejacket; "we will soon know who it is."

The hermit drew his revolver and waited with breathless intensity, his eyes snapping and glowing with an intense fire that was unpleasant to behold.

No more screams were heard, but a rustling sound fell on the ears of both, and Sim Sawyer stood with every sense strained to its utmost tension, watching for the author of the strange sounds to put in an appearance.

The waiting was of short duration.

The bushes parted, and a wild, weird form stepped before the twain—a woman with tangled hair, torn dress; with bare, bleeding feet, and eyes that glowed and flamed with the fires of madness.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A STRANGE RE-UNION.

OUR boy hero started back in no little wonder and alarm, when he gazed into the face of this strange, wild creature of the woods.

The wild screams were now accounted for, and, unintentionally perhaps, the mad woman had been the means of saving Bluejacket from a tragic death.

The moment the weird creature saw the two she halted, and glared at them as if about to rush forward and attack them with wild ferocity.

"Demons!" she cried out sharply, hissing, "what are you doing here? How dare you pollute this soil when I am seeking *him*? Where is he, the incarnate devil, who sent me to the madhouse?"

From one to the other she glared, as if expecting an answer, her long, bony fingers working nervously in the meantime.

If Sim Sawyer was interested and surprised, the hermit of the Wilderness was so deeply interested as to stand and

glare, spell-bound, at the haggard, hideous creature before him.

"Him—him—*whom* do you mean?" suddenly welled from the lips of the old hermit, as he bent eagerly forward and glared fixedly at the tattered female before him.

"The devil who covered his sinning heart with the mantle of a Christian minister—the demon in human guise, who drove an innocent but foolish girl to perdition, and then confined her in a madhouse that people might never know how great his villainy had been," returned the woman, in a voice full of seething fire.

"Ha!"

Nearer and nearer moved the mad hermit, until he stood within a few feet of the wild, tangled object in woman's garb.

"Ha! So you, too, have met the devil who wore the garb of a saint—you have met Turner Meeks——"

A low cry, almost a scream, interrupted him.

"You speak his name. My soul! I never expected to hear that name again." And the woman clasped her brow with both hands, and seemed shaken by a flood of emotion that was terrible to contemplate.

Bluejacket was mystified and startled.

For some moments a deep and awful silence rested over the scene. To the mind of the boy scout it seemed as though some terrible tragedy was about to take place. He saw a change go over the face of Vandorf the Mad, and soon it became ghastly white, as he moved nearer and nearer the writhing woman in the tattered gown.

"You knew him! you knew him!" cried the old hermit, hoarsely. "You knew Turner Meeks, the man of many crimes, the blasphemer in God's holy temple, the destroyer of saintly women. Ah! then it may be you knew *her*. She was my all, my only child, the light, and life, and joy of my heart—my Belinda——"

"Belinda!"

Back, with uplifted hands, reeled the woman.

"Belinda! Who speaks that name—that name that went out of the world forever when they took me to the mad-house?"

"You?"

"Aye! I am Belinda!"

"Oh, my God!"

And then Bluejacket witnessed a strange sight.

Those two mad creatures clasped in each other's arms.

The long, white locks of Vandorf mingling with the tangled black hair of the madwoman, as their heads rested, side by side, in a silent paroxysm of mutual grief.

The boy scout could not have moved then if he would, and he stood gazing in wonder upon the two, until, at length, they stood apart, and looked into each other's eyes. Bluejacket watched them closely and curiously. He noted the fact that the mad glow had died out of the two pairs of eyes, and that, for a little time, reason seemed enthroned once more.

"Dead! Ah, Belinda, you have been worse than that to me!" finally articulated Vandorf. "I knew not that you lived and suffered. This is ten times worse than my imaginings. Oh, God! why hast Thou forsaken this poor girl——"

A dry, hard laugh interrupted the speaker.

"Poor girl, indeed!" ejaculated the madwoman. "You are crazier than I, old man. I have been ten years in that bedlam of hell, and am an old woman now. See, these locks are spattered with the salt of time, and Mad Bell is fast nearing the shores of eternity. I escaped from the prison that has shut me in for so many years, and now I live solely to wreak vengeance on the man who made Belinda, the sweet and gentle, Old Bell, the hag of bedlam. Yes, for revenge, and when I accomplish that, then am I satisfied and ready to die."

"You shall have it soon," cried Vandorf. "The scoundrel isn't far away, but just now he is surrounded by military friends, and cannot be approached. Come, Belinda, come with me to my mountain home. You will be safe there, and together we will plot the ruin of your destroyer."



Tears stood in the eyes of Mad Bell as she looked into the wrinkled face of her father. She seemed to remember him as in the days of her happy girlhood, and the recollections of those past happy days brought a swelling tide of feeling that the ruined woman could not repress.

"And—and so you have forgotten the curse?" uttered the woman, falteringly.

"The curse!" as if not remembering or understanding.

"You drove me from home with a curse, father. Have you forgotten that? I have not, and never could—not even when my brain has been one seething fire of madness. No, no, I——"

"Stop, Belinda!" commanded Vandorf. "I do remember now. I was enraged—a scoundrel; and when the news was brought me that you perished in the river, after being spurned by me, I felt that I was a murderer. I think that was what drove me to the woods and made me what I am—mad, mad!" and the old hermit swung his arms about rapidly—the old glow of insanity coming back swiftly to his eyes.

"A strange couple, indeed," thought Bluejacket, as he regarded them with the deepest curiosity. But it would not do for him to remain longer in his present position. He was anxious to get back to the army and participate in the coming battle. "My friends, I must bid you good-bye," said the young scout.

Not a word was spoken in reply by either of the mad people. Bluejacket believed it best to depart without attracting further attention, and he did so at once, and soon he was threading his way through the forest, unarmed, and in danger at any moment of encountering a party of the enemy.

But the boy scout had always trusted to luck heretofore, and his star of destiny had never failed him, and he believed it would not now.

He had gone perhaps a mile when he was brought up standing by the sudden, thundering explosion of guns not far away.

He stood and listened, awaiting developments.

And he had not long to wait ere several horsemen were seen dashing madly through the woods.

They wore the blue, and a throb of joy welled up in the heart of the young scout when he recognized the face of one of his army comrades approaching at a rapid gallop.

"Ha! that you, Bluejacket? Quick! the rebs are coming."

For an instant the dragoon halted and reached out his hand. The next moment the light young scout was swung to a seat behind the trooper, and then away shot the horse with his double burden at a dangerous rate of speed through the pine woods.

The rattle of carbines and patter and singing noise made be leaden pellets reminded the two Unionists that the gray-coats were in hot pursuit.

A hot race now ensued.

Some of the raiding Yankees were shot down and some captured; but our boy hero and his companion were lucky enough to gain the Union lines in safety, after a hot chase.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WILDERNESS.

AFTER five months of inactivity the Army of the Potomac was again called upon to resume the offensive.

During this long interval, however, it had been recruited, reorganized, and otherwise increased in efficiency, till now, as it was about to move once more against the enemy, it presented an array of strength and valor such as never before was marshaled on Virginia soil.

It was on the 3d of May, 1864, that the grand movement was begun which was to result in a series of battles the most bloody ever recorded on the annals of time. We, however, have only to do with a few of the events occurring in the battle of the Wilderness.

To give a complete history of this one battle would require many times the limits of this little volume.

The battle was one of the most peculiar recorded in history, the ground over which the contending armies swayed being densely wooded. Think of it, reader: Three hundred thousand men struggling in the throes of deadly combat, in one vast woods, where it was once supposed only the Indian and the hunter could battle.

For seven miles, which was the extent of the battle front, a continual roar and crash went up, and as there was little breeze, the smoke hung over the woods in a dense, suffocating cloud, rendering it very difficult to manage the troops in a proper manner.

The whole surface of the country was covered with dense forests of low pines and dwarf oaks, with here and there an impenetrable growth of hazel. The roads were narrow and easily choked up by troops. There was obviously no opportunity for artillery.

A few batteries were interposed here and there in an open space, or by a roadside; but the great artillery trains of both armies were silent in the rear, and even the sections planted here and there were of little use.

The battles, therefore, which ensued on the 5th and 6th were essentially infantry battles.

There were certain ridges in the rolling country, with gullies and ravines, which afforded some opportunity for skill in dispositions; and these were used to advantage. But all maneuvering was rendered difficult by the density of the underbrush. About noon General Griffin, commanding the first division of Warren's corps, was ordered to push forward his forces to the right and left of the turnpike, and feel the enemy.

Less than a mile's march, stretching across the turnpike, brought them against a part of Ewell's force, well posted on a wooded acclivity.

A sharp engagement followed, resulting in the repulse of the Union advance, and the boys in blue fell black, leaving two pieces of artillery, with nearly all the horses killed, in the hands of the enemy.

Reinforcements came to Griffin's support, and the onward rush of the foe was speedily checked.

It was evident that Lee had made an adroit and fierce attempt to overpower the Union army before it arrived in position, either by interposing himself between its right and the Rapidan, or by piercing its right center.

The moment his attempt was perceived, General Meade had directed General Warren to attack briskly, and the result was a repulse of the enemy in that direction as effectual as the arrest of the Union advance.

The rebels now transferred their attack to the left center, and about three o'clock endeavored to pass in between Warren and Hancock—the latter of whom, in obedience to his recalling orders, had checked his advance, and was rapidly marching across to close the gap in the line of battle.

He arrived in season, with no time to spare, and found the advance of the enemy already inserting themselves in the interval. Getty's division of Sedgwick's corps had been temporarily detached, and moved to the left, on the right of the Orange Court House plank-road.

The advance of the second corps, consisting of a single brigade, had barely formed a junction with Getty, when Hill's rebel hordes were upon them with great force. The stubborn fighting of these two divisions enabled the remainder of the Union left to arrive and form—Hancock bursting on the enemy's right with a hot fire of musketry.

Birney, Barlow and Gibbons, commanding respectively the third, first and fourth divisions, successively hurried their forces to the battle.

The ground was fearfully overgrown with shrub trees, nearly as thick as if shooting from the same root.

In a few moments urgent requests came from the front for reinforcements. The enemy was repeating the tactics of Chancellorsville, in falling with almost superhuman power on one wing. This time, however, he was foiled.



The battle raged for three hours precisely where it began, along a line of less than a mile.

As fast as the Union forces came up they were sent in; still no ground was gained, none lost.

It was all musketry, rolling surge upon surge, without the least cessation.

Such was the nature of the ground, but two cannon could be brought to bear upon the foe. The work was at close range.

There was no room in that dense thicket for maneuvering, no possibility of a bayonet charge, no help worth mentioning from artillery, none from cavalry; nothing but close, square, face-to-face volleys of fatal musketry.

The wounded streamed out, and fresh troops poured in. Stretchers passed along with ghastly burdens, and returned, reeking with blood, for more.

Word was brought that the ammunition was failing.

Sixty rounds had been fired in one steady stand-up fight; and yet the combat was not ended.

Boxes of cartridges were placed on the returning stretchers, that the struggle might not cease for want of deadly powder and balls.

The volleys grow nearer; but the bullets are flying high, and limbs chipped from the tree-tops now and then fall to the ground.

General Hancock rides along the line, and is recognized by the men with a burst of enthusiasm.

Cheer on cheer rings on the air, and the soldiers in blue redouble their efforts. The deadly hail of musketry is perhaps unsurpassed for fury in the record of the war.

The sun of heaven hides his face before the awful scene, as if in mourning for the brave boys dead and mangled on that bloody field that pales the horrors of Waterloo.

It is seemingly a death struggle of braves.

Smothered cheers arise at times, but no glad shout of victory rings from either the blue or the gray on that woeful field.

Like bull-dogs the two armies grapple, and strain, and groan, yet neither wins the struggle. When night comes, men of the North and South lie down amid smoke and blood, to await only the return of day to begin the work of death again.

At early dawn on Friday, the 6th, hostilities were warmly renewed.

Both armies were evidently bent on attack.

Sedgwick had been ordered to advance at five o'clock in the morning; but fifteen minutes earlier the gray-coats, under fierce Ewell, were upon him in force.

Again the thunders of bloody strife awake the echoes of the Wilderness; smoke, flame and death ride on the air.

The line swayed to and fro with the shifting fortune of the terrific fight, and the thick and heavy chaparral in contention was covered with the dead and wounded of both armies.

The Union right and center gained a little ground, under hot fire; but it was only to meet the enemy's intrenched line, posted on an extended ridge, and approached through a thickly-wooded swamp of considerable width, protected by a front and flank fire.

This position was twice unsuccessfully attempted by the Union right and center, in the course of the morning.

As on the previous day, neither party was gaining anything, and the terrible slaughter promised to be but a useless sacrifice. Should Grant be beaten now, the laurels won in the West would most suddenly fade from his brow.

On that fateful 6th of May many hearts were beating with deep fear, and waiting with keenest anxiety the outcome of the terrible struggle in the Wilderness.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE "DUTCH BRIGADIERS."

WHERE was Bluejacket during those remarkable two days of horrible slaughter in the Wilderness?

He gained Grant's army in safety, as has been said, and

when he learned that the Unionists were pushing rapidly forward to outflank Lee, the youth sought and obtained a position in the ranks of a regiment hailing from the vicinity of his own home.

This regiment was made up principally of Germans, and they had been uniformed and armed at the expense of the colonel, who was a very rich man, and who had seen service in the fatherland some years before.

Although wearing the blue of the Federal army, the Germans had a peculiar head-gear consisting of helmet hats or caps, after the fashion of the troops in their own country. This was a fancy of the Dutch colonel, which was not objected to by the government.

The "Dutch Brigadiers" was the name sometimes used in speaking of this regiment.

Since Sim Sawyer's father was a German, the young scout naturally turned toward men of his ancestral land, and with the "Dutch Brigadiers" the boy marched into the tangled passes of the Wilderness, on the 5th of May, and with them participated in some of the hottest fighting of the day.

After the first day's battle, in the light of a burning brush-heap, Bluejacket sat and read his Testament, and thus kept his promise to his mother that he would not forget home instruction under the hardening influences of camp-life.

The boy was soon wondering what had been the fate of Vandorf the Mad, and the equally insane Belinda. Some days had passed since his adventure near the hill whose summit was crowded by the strange stone man, and now that the army was in the vicinity, Sim Sawyer believed that the fate of war would rend the secret from the hermit, or from the bowels of the rock beneath King Dorus.

Smoke hung deep over the woods.

Occasionally the ears of the boy scout were assailed by groans. Too well he knew what it meant. Many of the wounded lay in the vicinity, who were uncared for.

The sounds did not tend to lighten the boys spirits in the least.

At length the boy lay down and sought rest in slumber. The god of sleep delayed but a short time; and Bluejacket awoke not until the boom of great guns announced the opening of the fearful contest. The Dutch Brigadiers partook of a hasty breakfast, and were then ordered into the fight.

"Onward they march embattled, to the sound  
Of martial harmony; fifes, cornets, drums,  
That rouse the sleepy soul to arms, and bold,  
Heroic deeds."

Forward into the thick of the fray went those brave German-Americans, and throughout that bloody Friday not one in that chosen band had need to blush for his native or adopted land.

Late in the day, a little past four o'clock, the rebels, under Longstreet and Hill, charged upon the Union position along the Brock road with such irresistible violence that they penetrated the Union lines at the intersection of this road with the turnpike leading to Orange Court House, and planted a rebel standard on the Union intrenchment.

For a moment the safety of the corps seemed in imminent danger. Many of the men, becoming demoralized, were hurrying toward the rear; and the rebels, yelling like demons, were confident of success.

Here was an open space, and a rise of ground, and the enemy managed to hold the position long enough to get several pieces of artillery in position, and then the work of appalling slaughter began.

It was a critical time in that day of battle.

Confusion seemed seizing upon the Union blues, as shot and shell poured from vomiting cannon into their devoted ranks.

It was at this juncture that Colonel Carroll's Union brigade came up the turnpike, and the right was composed of the Dutch Brigadiers.

"Fix bayonets!—charge!"



This cry rang along the line, and forward went the gallant Germans into the jaws of death.

Great swathes were mowed in their ranks, yet the helmeted heroes pressed on.

"Forward! double-quick!"

With bayonets gleaming the gallant heroes dashed madly forward.

Down go the colors, but scarcely do they touch the ground ere they are snatched from the earth by a boy in blue jacket and gray breeches.

"The Union and Fatherland!" shouted Sim Sawyer, as he waved the flag and shot forward into the fray.

To the right and left men fell, and ten thousand whistling bullets seemed singing in the ears of the boy scout, yet he heeded them not, seeming to bear a charmed life.

The colonel of the German band fell backward with a German war-cry on his lips. A bullet had pierced his heart, and he slept in bloody garments on the reeking sod by the roadside, never to wake again, save in the land beyond mortal vision.

Forward swept the blues, and, with a mad yell, bore the gray hordes back, swept the road and hill-top clean, and turned the guns on the fleeing foe, sending them pell-mell to the woods once more.

It was a heroic charge.

General Hancock accredited Colonel Carroll with saving his corps, and, perhaps, the whole army from disaster.

The colonel had received a ball through his arm on the afternoon of Thursday, but, nevertheless, refused to leave his command, although suffering severely with his wound. General Ward, commanding a brigade of Birney's division, was also conspicuous for gallantry.

His horse being lost, he mounted a caisson, and ordering it driven rapidly a quarter of a mile to the rear, he gathered, in a few minutes, nearly a brigade of stragglers, and, inspiring them with enthusiasm by his presence and heroic example, led them on the double-quick back to the front.

The enemy being repulsed at all points, the Union troops gradually gained their advance position.

Just after dark, when the battle seemed over, a wild rebel yell burst at the right. It was evident the enemy had massed and were charging.

It was at first believed to be but a night attack to ascertain the Union position; but it proved more—the enemy meant to break through the Federal lines, and succeeded, pouring irresistibly forward with wild yells of triumph.

## CHAPTER X.

### A VILLAIN'S DEED.

ON Sedgwick's extreme right was a brigade under General Seymour, who had been assigned to its command only two days before.

Connecting with this was Shaler's brigade, and then Mills'. These troops were at work intrenching when fallen upon.

The enemy came down like a torrent, rolling and dashing in living waves, and flooding up against the whole Sixth Corps. The main line stood like a rock, but not so the extreme right. That flank was instantly and utterly turned.

The rebel line was the longer, and surged around Seymour's brigade, tided over it and through it, then beat against Shaler's, and bore away his nearest regiments. All this transpired in less than ten minutes.

Seymour's men, seeing their pickets flying, and hearing the shouts of the rebels charging with demoniac fury, were smitten with panic, and rushed together in a disordered herd, endeavoring to make their way through the woods in the rear to the plank-road.

The greater part of this brigade, however, and most of Shaler's men were captured, together with their commanders.

General Seymour had been conspicuous for gallantry throughout the day; and, according to universal testimony,

did all that could be done, by skill or daring, to avert the catastrophe.

The whole right wing, and, indeed, the whole army, was in imminent peril.

General Sedgwick, however, with superhuman efforts and direct personal exposure, rallied and held his troops, thus saving the army from the impending destruction which threatened it.

With their success on the right, the enemy sullenly withdrew, darkness having already covered the field.

During the night, preparations were made to strengthen the right, and to repair the disaster the last charge had inflicted; otherwise it was comparatively quiet, the Union army lying silently along their hasty lines of rifle-pits, and the rebels still keeping their more formidable intrenchments on the edge of the woods, while the broad intervening space, so often fought over, was held by the dead and wounded of both combatants.

During the two days' struggle, that human hyena, Giles Gorfoot, hovered near the scene of strife, although he was extremely careful not to expose the ex-ministerial carcass to the bullets of the foe. He was not an enlisted man, and consequently not obliged to participate in the awful struggle.

The only post that Gorfoot had ever sought in the army was that of regimental chaplain, which he, however, failed to obtain, and afterward, when a place was offered, he sourly refused to accept it.

He had other views afoot at the time.

And now, after his adventure on the mountain, the villain was determined to explore the mysteries of the pyramid crowned by the image of King Dorus.

But the wild crash of battle interfered with his plans for the time, since the storm of the contest raged at times most hotly in the vicinity of the hill where the stone image held his throne.

Gorfoot had been chagrined at the escape of the boy scout, but, since the youth was really of little consequence to him, the villain soon got over the disappointment.

It was late in the afternoon of the second day's battle that Giles Gorfoot stood less than a quarter of a mile from the foot of the wooded elevation on which stood the stone image.

The smoke of battle rested over the woods, and a strong smell of burnt gunpowder was in the air. But no troops of either army were in the vicinity, and the scheming villain believed the time for action had come.

"I must know the secret of King Dorus," muttered Gorfoot, in a low undertone. "There is a treasure beneath the pedestal, I feel sure, and the man who is bold enough to explore the idol will win the prize."

Then the villain began examining his arms, which consisted of a rifle, two revolvers and a bowie-knife.

"I'm armed for work," muttered the scoundrel, with a grim smile; "a perfect walking arsenal. All that is necessary now is to put a bullet into the carcass of that mad old fool of a Vandorf, and the coast will be clear for future action. His body found on the field of battle would surprise no one, and no investigation would be entered into. This fight between the blue and the gray gives me the opportunity I seek."

"A villain plotting treason!"

Gorfoot started as though pierced by a knife.

"Who speaks?" he demanded, sharply, as he whirled entirely about without seeing a living soul.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

A hollow, horrible laugh fell on his ears that sent a cold chill down the villain's spine.

"Fates and furies! where are you?"

"Here."

The bushes parted, and a strangely weird and startling form confronted the plotting villain.

"Saints defend us! Whom have we here?" exclaimed Giles Gorfoot, reeling back in alarm.

No wonder the villain was startled, for the person who



confronted him was not one to soothe the ruffled spirit of a plotting rascal.

A woman, haggard of face, with sunken, flaming eyes, tattered dress and tangled hair, stood up before the rebel villain, and, pointing one long, bony finger at him, cried:

"Traitor! why are you not with the brave men of Lee and Hill? Why are you sneaking here like the coward you are? I know why. You haven't the soul of a man, and both blue and gray hate and despise such a carrion!"

The arm fell back to its natural position, and the woman leaned forward and transfixed the man with her flaming eyes.

He shuddered and drew back a step.

There was something in the woman's countenance that was absolutely terrifying.

"Woman, you are mad!" finally articulated Gorfoot, as he reeled farther away from the specter of human wretchedness before him.

"Mad! You have spoken truly, I *am* mad, but not so when the minions of a demon in human guise sent me to the stone-walled home of the bedlamites. Do you know him, the man who called himself a Christian, and went round converting people, with the cloak of the ministry about his person, while his heart was a seething slough of corruption—do you know him?"

"No—no," articulated Gorfoot, fairly trembling under the flame of her eyes.

"You are older, but *you* look like the man. Ha! it's been years since that time—many, many years, and the scoundrel must have grown older. Yes, it's the very man. *Turner Meeks*, I know you, and you cannot escape the vengeance of the woman whose honor you murdered, whose soul you caged in a madhouse, and whose brain became crazed under the torture. Ha! you writhe and squirm as a serpent under the heel of doom! You are the man, and I am glad to find you at last. Belinda will avenge the wrongs of the past, she will laugh to see the blood of the hypocrite and coward flow freely. Ho, ho!"

And with this blood-curdling outburst, the madwoman suddenly drew a knife from her bosom and displayed its glittering blade in the eyes of the frightened villain.

"Yes, this will let your heart's blood out nicely."

"Back!" cried Giles Gorfoot, as the hideous female moved toward him, clutching her weapon and making ready, as a catamout might, to leap upon her prey.

"Eh?"

She paused an instant, and glared more furiously than ever upon him.

"You are mistaken in the man. I am Giles Gorfoot, and never was a minister."

"No—but you pretended to be one."

"Never."

"It's a lie!" hissed the madwoman. "I know you now, hypocrite, and you cannot escape. I mean to have your black heart's blood for the work of infamy you did in the past, when I was a girl."

She advanced again.

One step backward the man took; then his rifle came to a level. The madwoman uttered a startled cry. It came too late. A flash and loud report came, and the woman fell bleeding at the feet of Giles Gorfoot.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A TRAGIC SCENE.

"*THAT* fixes you," muttered Gorfoot, as he contemplated his work.

Then he walked hurriedly from the spot.

"No man can blame me for shooting the woman," soliloquized Giles Gorfoot, by way of easing his conscience; "I did it in self-defense."

Naturally enough the villain turned "his" steps in the direction of the hill whose summit was crowned by the stone

image beneath whose feet lay a treasure that would place the possessor above want.

"I must have the prize," muttered Gorfoot. "I am glad Belinda is dead, for I suppose that mad hag was indeed her. I wonder how she came to escape from the clutches of old Johnson? I'll ask him about it some day. Ugh! to think that I once actually was in love with that creature, Belinda!"

But a little further had the man gone when he came to a sudden halt. He heard voices and caught the blaze of a camp-fire.

A body of soldiers had gone into camp not far from the foot of the hill whereon the hermit had set his king.

This was bad, and boded ill to the plans of Gorfoot.

If the soldiers found the image they would doubtless destroy it, for soldiers are natural vandals, and then the treasure beneath would be brought to light, and none of it ever find its way to the pockets of the man who was willing to sell his soul for the possession.

Withdrawing a short distance, Giles Gorfoot made a detour and approached the pyramid from a different quarter. He had gained the foot of the wooded slope, when such a cry burst on his startled senses as to quite unman him for the time.

It was a wild, unearthly shriek, that seemed possessed of ten thousand cat-power.

"Great Heavens! what was that?" articulated Gorfoot in a horrified tone.

The sound came from the direction of the wooded pyramid, and as darkness had settled, the coward heart of Gorfoot forbade his exploring the vicinity of the stone giant that night.

Early the following morning, however, the rebel villain was once more in the vicinity of the stone image.

Lee's army was in full retreat toward Spottsylvania Court House, and now or never was the time to accomplish the wish of his heart.

Gorfoot was thankful to find no soldiers in the vicinity of the mound. Doubly armed as he was, he felt no fear. When the mad hermit had overpowered him before, it was while sleeping off the effects of a debauch. Now the villain flattered himself that he could not be overpowered so easily.

With cautious tread Gorfoot stole up the miniature mountain, and in a little time he was peering into the opening at the summit. A murmur of satisfaction came to the lips of the man, when he discovered the stone image in the same spot, with not a living soul near to interfere with the examination he proposed to make.

To make sure that the coast was clear, Gorfoot circled the cleared spot about the image, and examined the bushes, satisfying himself that no one was in the neighborhood.

"Now then, Mr. Giant, I mean to penetrate the secret of your construction," uttered Gorfoot, leaning his rifle against the side of the image, and proceeding to examine it closely.

Scarcely had he begun his investigations, when he felt a hand on his shoulder.

Looking up with a start, Giles Gorfoot found himself peering into the face of Vandorf the Mad!

The mad hermit's eyes sparkled, and his lips were drawn back, revealing clinched and gleaming teeth.

"Back here again, man of many crimes?" uttered the hermit, in a voice full of concentrated passion.

"Yes," answered Gorfoot, gaining his feet, with a mad oath. "I am back here; and this time I am not the defenseless being I was when you put the thongs upon my arms."

"You were kneeling at the feet of King Dorus—it is well," uttered the madman. "Did you offer up a prayer for the salvation of your soul?"

"No."

"I am sorry, for you must die!"

A thrill of alarm shot to the heart of Gorfoot. He glanced at his rifle, but it now lay on the ground in the



dust, while in his right hand Vandorf the Mad clasped a naked, ugly-looking knife.

"*This shall find a way to your heart!*" And the mad hermit raised his knife aloft.

Giles Gorfoot saw the deadly gleam in the eyes of the mad defender of the stone king, and realized that the time for action had come.

Quickly he dashed upon the aged hermit, and with a wrench and a trip, hurled him to the ground.

The struggle that then ensued was most terrible.

Over and over on the ground rolled the two men, the old hermit proving no mean antagonist, in his madness, for the stalwart and much younger Giles Gorfoot.

With grating teeth and flaming eye the mad hermit attempted to bury his knife in the bosom of his assailant.

Vain attempt; but the desperate efforts of Vandorf prevented Gorfoot from using one of his revolvers, it requiring all his powers to keep the hermit from slaying him with the knife.

Again and again Gorfoot attempted to wrench the knife from the clasp of his foe. It was a desperate struggle, the end of which meant death for one or both of the combatants.

How was it to end?

Great drops of sweat stood out on the brow of the rebel schemer, and he realized that he was to have no easy victory over his ancient enemy.

Spang!

High above the sound of the moaning breeze came the crack of a rifle, and the breath of the bullet fanned the cheek of Giles Gorfoot, as he bent over the old hermit in mighty effort to conquer the madman.

"My soul! who comes now?" gasped Gorfoot. "Am I to have two foes to fight instead of one?"

Even as he spoke, a terrific scream filled his ears, the same horrible cry that had twice before frightened him nearly out of his senses.

"Scoundrel! release me!" panted Vandorf.

"Never!" grated the overwrought rebel.

He must end the struggle at once if he would escape from his new enemy.

With both hands clinching the wrist of the madman, Gorfoot, with a prodigious wrench, tore the knife from his clasp. He cut his fingers severely in the operation, but this the villain did not mind, now that the victory was about to perch upon his banners.

"I have you now!" hissed Gorfoot, in a tone of keenest joy. "Die, like the mad dog you are!"

"Mercy!"

Thud!

In answer to the moan for mercy, Giles Gorfoot buried the keen blade to the hilt in the breast of his fallen foe.

It was the answer of a demon.

Then the rebel villain came to his feet with a great cry.

Spang!

"Oh, my God!"

Clutching his side, Gorfoot reeled back against the stone giant, a haggard horror suddenly sweeping across his face.

Blood was streaming through his fingers, and it was evident he was rapidly weakening.

"Foiled! foiled!" he gasped huskily, weakly, for the rapidly flowing blood was destroying him.

The last bullet of an unseen foe had found its mark, and the infamous ex-preacher would soon see his last of earth.

Removing one hand, his right, the villain succeeded in drawing his revolver, and then he glared at the fringe of bushes near.

"Why don't the rascal come. Ha! must I die without killing my slayer?"

Even as the trembling lips uttered the words, the bushes parted, and a draggled, haggard creature sprang into the opening.

"My soul! it is Belinda! I did not finish her last night it seems. I will now, however; we will all die together!"

With the words Gorfoot raised his revolver and fired.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SECRET OF THE IMAGE.

Yes, it was true; Lee's legions were on the retreat, and by noon General Grant learned this fact and set his army in motion to hotly pursue.

Our boy scout was free again for the time, and bethinking him of the strange stone giant, whose face he had disfigured, Bluejacket resolved to find the spot and investigate the mysteries of the place.

He was already toiling up the miniature mountain, when the report of a rifle rang in his ears. This was soon followed by a second, and then by a third less loud report.

"Must be a skirmish up yonder," thought Bluejacket, as he pressed forward cautiously.

In a little time he gained the opening and peered into the circle presided over by the stone idol.

A strange and awful silence hung over the place, portending some terrible evil. There stood the image, as grand and grim as ever, but no human forms were to be seen.

At first the boy scout thought the place was untenanted, and he was wondering what had caused the report of firearms, when a groan assailed his ears.

Then he looked more closely, and discovered that a horrible tragedy had taken place within the little open space about the huge stone king.

With boyish impetuosity, the young scout advanced into the opening.

He nearly stumbled over the body of a woman—the mad woman he had seen in the woods some days before.

Bluejacket uttered a cry of amazement and horror.

He saw that the glassy eyes were glazed in death, and knew that a foul work had been done.

A little further the youth moved, and then the two bleeding forms of Vandorf and Gorfoot met his gaze. And they were both dead, the base of the stone-giant being spattered with their blood.

Again that moan.

It proceeded from the spot where lay Vandorf, the Mad.

"Ha! the old fellow still lives!" exclaimed the boy scout, kneeling at the side of the fallen hermit.

"Ah, it—it is you, my boy," gasped the trembling lips of the dying hermit.

"It is I, sir."

"A terrible thing has happened," said Vandorf. "The man who ruined my life has done for me at last. I heard shots, and saw him fall; can you find if he has been badly hurt? Was it you who fired?"

"I did not fire. Your enemy, Gorfoot, lies there——"

"Wounded?"

"No, dead!"

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated the old man fervently. "Who did the righteous deed?"

It seemed that Vandorf did not know of the dead woman lying near, and after a little hesitation Bluejacket mentioned her name.

"Belinda! Ah, yes; she escaped from the madhouse. Poor, poor Belinda! poor child; better she were dead, a thousand times, than this."

After hesitating a few moments, the boy scout confided the whole truth to the dying hermit.

The old man's eyes brightened. The news of his daughter's death did not seem to shock him in the least.

"It is better so, poor girl!" he murmured. "She was ruined in body, and death was better than life, and who knows but what the good God will condone her sin and receive her poor, shattered soul to his house in the great hereafter. Do you believe in such things, my boy?"

"I believe in a God who is good, and who will forgive all who are worthy to receive his blessing," answered the boy scout in a grave tone.

"Then there is a chance for Belinda."

"I feel that there is."

"Heaven bless you, my boy. I shall soon meet my poor,



wronged child, and—and my wife up there,” and the hermit glanced upward, too weak now to raise his hand, for he was still bleeding badly, and all attempts on Sim’s part to stay the flow proved unavailing.

“No use,” murmured the old man, huskily. “I am done for, and I am really glad it is so. I don’t care to live now.”

“No, but about the giant——”

“Ha! my image, King Dorus. Yes, yes, I must not forget,” cried the hermit, in a hoarse voice. “He has performed his part. I’ve no relative living in the wide world, and I bequeath the man to you, Sim Sawyer.”

“What shall I do with him?”

“Press up yonder, just under the chin, that is the spring.”

The boy scout sprang up and obeyed.

To his wonder the front of the image swung open, and Bluejacket peered in to note the fact that a ladder peered up from below.

“All that you find down there is yours,” said the dying hermit, who seemed to have recovered his reason as life began to ebb away. “All my earthly treasure is there, and the stone image has done his share in defending that treasure.”

Little more could the old hermit say.

He choked for utterance soon, and half an hour after entering the mountain glade, the boy scout found himself the only living object in the place.

He buried the three corpses in one grave, and it was a long job, not accomplished until late in the afternoon.

After this the boy descended into the giant.

He found a small cellar beneath the pedestal. Directly underneath was a large coal-scuttle, which had doubtless been used at times, the giant acting as a chimney, there being a hole in the top of the head visible only on close observation.

Partially covered by small stones, in one corner of the cellar, Bluejacket found a large tin box which, on opening, was found to contain gold coin to the amount of several thousand dollars.

To Sim Sawyer this was indeed a bonanza.

He did not feel that it was safe to leave his treasure here, and so, with considerable effort, he conveyed the box of money to the upper air, and buried it in a secluded spot on the mountain side.

The giant our young hero permitted to remain unmolested, while he hastened to rejoin the Federal army, then in hot pursuit of Lee.

Bluejacket followed the fortunes of Grant to the end of the civil strife, and soon after the end, returned North through the Wilderness. His treasure had remained unmolested, but the stone giant was gone, and the cellar caved in and filled with rubbish.

Bluejacket never fully understood the whole secret connected with the image; but the money he obtained was sufficient to set him up in business in one of the Northern cities. He prospered from the start, won the heart of a nice girl, married her, and with increase of money and family came joy and comfort. He is now a prominent business man, respected by all who know him. The money found beneath the stone giant was the foundation for all his fortune.

[THE END.]

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